



## Ministry of Defence

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### Issued By:

Defence Statistics (Health)  
#6028  
Oak 0 West  
MOD Abbeywood (North)  
Bristol  
BS34 8JH

### Enquiries

Press Office:  
Tel: 020 721 83253

### Statistical Enquiries:

Head of Health  
Defence Statistics  
Tel: 030 679 84423  
[DefStrat-Stat-Health-Hd@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-Health-Hd@mod.uk)

### Internet:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>

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If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about Defence Statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

E-mail:  
[defstrat-stat-enquiries-mailbox.co.uk](mailto:defstrat-stat-enquiries-mailbox.co.uk)

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# UK Armed Forces Operational deaths post World War II

## INTRODUCTION

1. This Official Statistic is the first in a new series providing summary statistics on the number of in-Service deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel which occurred as a result of a British, United Nations (UN) or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) medal earning Operation since World War II. This report will be updated annually at the end of March and six weeks after the end of each continuing or new medal earning Operation.
2. This report provides information on deaths for each medal earning Operation since World War II for UK Armed Forces personnel on a tri-Service basis and include both regular and reservist personnel. This data does not include members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Merchant Navy or MOD civilians.
3. This report is being released to advise MOD and the public of the loss of life to UK Armed Forces as a result of Operations. This report has been developed in response to requests from the public for information to populate local war memorials and for use at public addresses during the Remembrance Day period. By releasing this information it contributes to the MOD's commitment to release information where possible.
4. The information shown has been compiled from data held by Defence Statistics on 31 October 2014.
5. Details of the data sources and the methods used to collect and analyse the data and additional information are described in the section 'Data Sources & Methods'.

## KEY POINTS

6. Since the end of World War II, 7,145 UK Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of Operations in medal earning theatres.
7. The largest number of deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel in one Operation was the loss of 1,443 lives in Malaya between 16 June 1948 and 31 July 1960.
8. The second largest number of deaths occurred as a result of Operations in Northern Ireland where 1,441 UK Armed Forces Personnel died between 14 August 1969 and 31 July 2007.
9. The third largest number of UK Armed Forces deaths as a result of a medal earning Operation was the United Nations led campaign in Korea between 27 June 1950 and 27 July 1954 which resulted in the loss of 1,129 UK Armed Forces personnel.
10. NATO and United Nations led Operations in Cyprus and the Balkans are ongoing, with the loss of three and 72 UK Armed Forces personnel to date respectively.
11. At 31 October 2014, 453 UK Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of Operations in Afghanistan.

## DATA SOURCES & METHODS

### *Data Sources*

15. For data prior to 1984, Defence Statistics (Health) have access to the Armed Forces Memorial (AFM) database owned by the Defence Business Services (DBS) Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC, formerly the single Service casualty cells). The AFM database was created in order to identify Service personnel whose names were to be, and continue to be engraved on the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. The AFM database records the deaths of all personnel who have died in Service since 1st Jan 1948, and for those in Palestine only from 1st August 1945 to 31st August 1948.

16. For data since 1984, Defence Statistics (Health) receive weekly notifications of all regular Armed Forces deaths from the JCCC. Defence Statistics (Health) also receive cause of death information from military medical sources in the single Services. At the end of each calendar year, Defence Statistics (Health) cross-reference the medical information it holds against publicly available death certificate information available from the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), an Executive Non Departmental Public Body (ENDPB).

### *Data Coverage*

17. The information on deaths presented here are for all regular and reservist UK Armed Forces personnel only who have died as a result of an Operation in a medal earning theatre. Members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Merchant Navy and MOD civilians have not been included.

18. Operational deaths have been defined as a 'theatre of Operation where there is or has been the award of a British Operational medal or where there is or has been the award of a UN or NATO medal'. This is in accordance with the inclusion criteria for the Armed Forces Memorial, further details are available at : <http://www.veterans-uk.info/afm/index.htm>

19. Only those medal earning theatre's where a death has occurred have been presented. A full list of all medal earning theatres for UK Armed Forces personnel can be found at Annex A.

20. The majority of theatres presented where a death has occurred were awarded the General Service Medal (GSM) or the Operational Service Medal (OSM). A full list of medals awarded can be found at Annex B.

21. Operations which involved UK Armed Forces personnel but for which a Foreign and Commonwealth medal was awarded are not included in this publication.

22. The data presented is for all causes of death; Hostile action (a battle casualty who is killed outright or dies of wounds received in action), accidents, natural causes, assaults, coroner confirmed suicide or open verdicts and cause not known.

23. The data presented is not limited to those personnel who died specifically in the theatre of Operation. It also includes those personnel who may have been aeromedically evacuated from a theatre of Operation and subsequently died as a result of injuries sustained in that theatre, for example in a hospital in the UK. For Operations in Northern Ireland, data also includes those UK Armed Forces personnel who were targeted outside of Northern Ireland as a result of the troubles, such as the 1989 bombing at the Royal Marines School of Music in Deal, England.

24. A breakdown of deaths into those caused by hostile action deaths and other causes is only available for the following theatre's of Operation since 1984: Gulf 1, Balkans, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and pre 1984, for Northern Ireland only. This is because for deaths prior to 1984, Defence Statistics (Health) use the AFM database which was created in order to identify Service personnel whose names were to be, and continue to be engraved on the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire and not for statistical purposes. Whilst the name and Service number of each individual is validated, this database is not historically regarded as a validated source of fatality information due to it being populated manually from Service files. Therefore all causes of deaths have been provided without further breakdown for those Operational theatre's prior 1984 (excluding Northern Ireland).

### *Methods*

25. For deaths prior to 1984, Defence Statistics (Health) uses the AFM database and specifically

the 'Theatre' field to identify all those personnel who died as a result of Operations in a medal earning theatre.

26. For deaths since 1984 and for Northern Ireland and Falklands deaths only, the 'Conflict marker' field on the Defence Statistics (Health) Deaths database is used to identify deaths which occurred as a result of Operations in medal earning theatres. This field is derived by using the JCCC and former single Service casualty cells 'Operation' field as completed on the weekly notification.

27. In 2013, Defence Statistics produced a validated dataset of deaths as a result of the troubles in Northern Ireland, using a number of internal and external sources of information. Prior to this, figures for deaths as a result of Operations in Northern Ireland were produced in the Ministry of Defence publication: UK Defence Statistics 2008. These figures were sourced from the Police Service of Northern Ireland and not the Ministry of Defence and therefore do not match those presented in this report due to differing inclusion criteria.

28. It must also be noted that the Ministry of Defence do not have any control of figures produced on unofficial websites commemorating those who lost their lives as a result of Operations in medal earning theatres. It is entirely possible figures presented in this report differ from those sources due to varying anomalies in inclusion criteria.

*Strengths and weaknesses of data presented in this notice*

29. A strength of this publication is that considerable validation is undertaken against military and public records for deaths post 1984 to ensure that the information provided is complete and accurate and users of this publication should be confident that the numbers of fatalities presented are accurate.

30. For deaths prior to 1984, Defence Statistics (Health) use the AFM database which was created in order to identify Service personnel whose names were to be, and continue to be engraved on the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire and not for statistical purposes. Whilst the name and Service number of each individual is validated, this database is not historically regarded as a validated source of fatality information due to it being populated manually from Service files.

31. The information presented in this publication has been structured in such a way to release sensitive deaths information into the public domain in a way that contributes to the MOD accountability to the British public but which doesn't compromise the Operational security of UK Armed Forces personnel by revealing detail on individual incidents such as mechanism; nor that risk inadvertently revealing individual identities and therefore breaching the rights of the families of the deceased personnel (for which the MOD has a residual duty of care). Defence Statistics are regularly asked to release information such as date of death, location of death, deaths within a unit or rank held by the deceased, however, these requests are assessed on a case by case basis to ensure the information presented is aggregated to a level to ensure individual's cannot be identified and Operational security is not compromised.

**REVISIONS**

32. In preparing this document, Defence Statistics will continually carry out a review of the data recorded on in-Service deaths as a result of Operations in medal earning theatres among UK Armed Forces personnel to ensure the highest accuracy of information and that all cases of deaths attributable to an Operation are recorded.

33. Any future revisions to previously released data will be made and republished with the revision annotated with an 'r' in the relevant table of data.

## RESULTS

34. **Table 1** presents the number of UK Armed Forces deaths by medal earning theatre since World War II. The numbers presented are broken down by deaths as a result of hostile action and other causes of deaths which include accidents, natural causes, assaults, coroner confirmed suicide or open verdicts and causes not yet known, where this level of detail is available (see paragraph 22 for a further explanation).

35. The majority of operational theatres presented where a death has occurred were awarded the General Service Medal (GSM) or the Operational Service Medal (OSM). A full list of medals awarded can be found at Annex B.

**Table 1: UK Armed Forces Operational deaths post World War II by medal earning theatre and cause, 3 September 1945 to 31 October 2014 numbers**

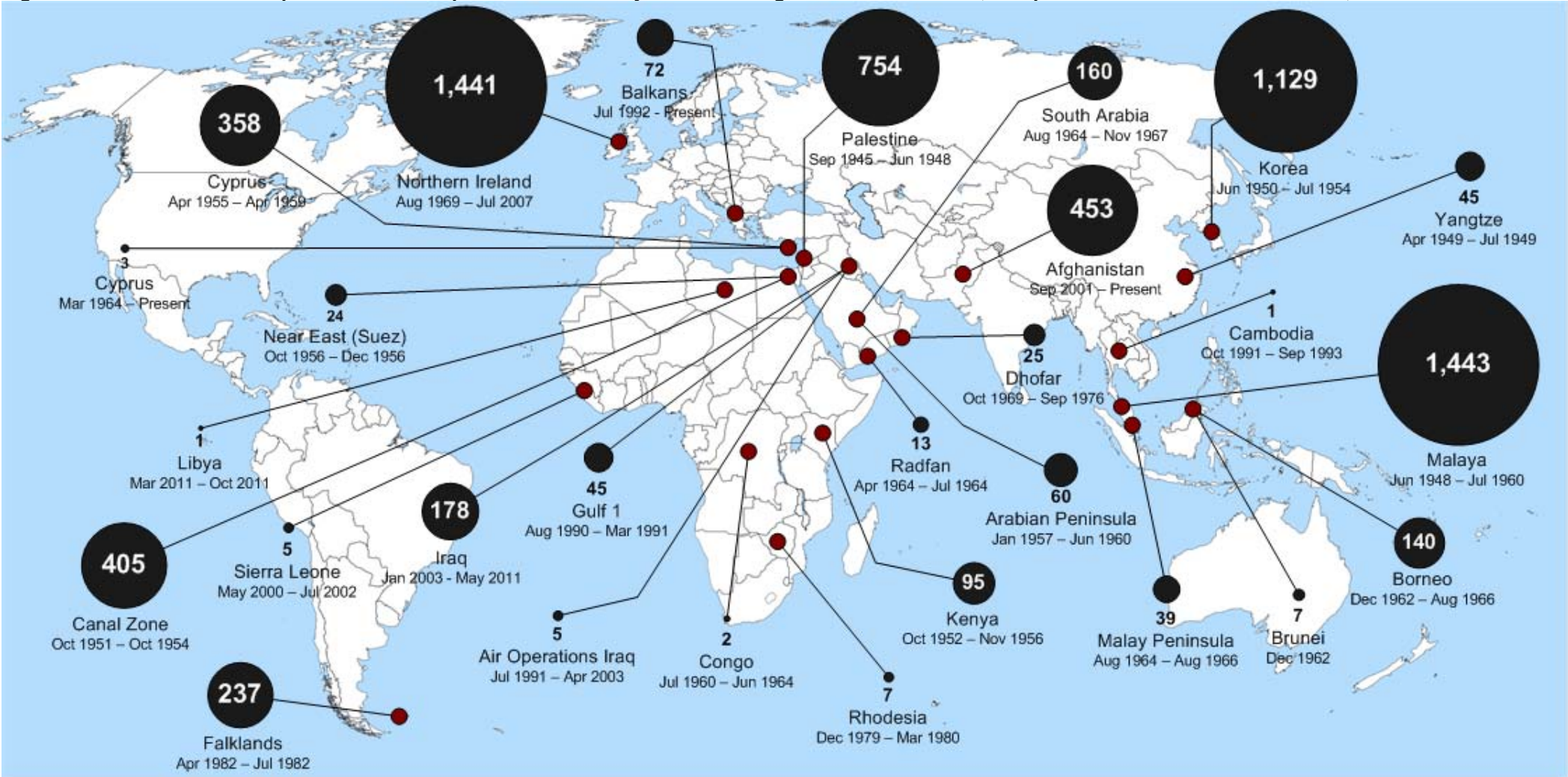
Medal Theatre	Date	Total deaths	of which Hostile action <sup>6</sup>	of which Other causes <sup>7</sup>
<b>All theatres</b>		<b>7,145</b>	-	-
Palestine (GSM)	3 Sep 1945 to 30 Jun 1948	754	-	-
Malaya (GSM)	16 Jun 1948 to 31 Jul 1960	1,443	-	-
Yangtze (NGSM)	20 Apr 1949 to 31 Jul 1949	45	-	-
Korea <sup>1</sup> (UN)	27 Jun 1950 to 27 Jul 1954	1,129	-	-
Canal Zone (GSM)	16 Oct 1951 to 19 Oct 1954	405	-	-
Kenya (AGSM)	21 Oct 1952 to 17 Nov 1956	95	-	-
Cyprus (GSM)	1 Apr 1955 to 18 Apr 1959	358	-	-
Near East (Suez) (GSM)	31 Oct 1956 to 22 Dec 1956	24	-	-
Arabian Peninsula (GSM)	1 Jan 1957 to 30 Jun 1960	60	-	-
Congo (ONUC)	10 Jul 1960 to 30 Jun 1964	2	-	-
Brunei (GSM)	8 Dec 1962 to 23 Dec 1962	7	-	-
Borneo (GSM)	24 Dec 1962 to 11 Aug 1966	140	-	-
Cyprus <sup>2</sup> (UNFICYP)	27 Mar 1964 to present	3	-	-
Radfan (GSM)	25 Apr 1964 to 31 Jul 1964	13	-	-
South Arabia (GSM)	1 Aug 1964 to 30 Nov 1967	160	-	-
Malay Peninsula (GSM)	17 Aug 1964 to 11 Aug 1966	39	-	-
Northern Ireland <sup>3</sup> (GSM)	14 Aug 1969 to 31 Jul 2007	1,441	722	719
Dhofar (GSM)	1 Oct 1969 to 3 Sep 1976	25	-	-
Rhodesia	1 Dec 1979 to 20 Mar 1980	5	-	-
South Atlantic (Falklands)	2 Apr 1982 to 12 Jul 1982	237	-	-
Gulf 1 (GSM)	2 Aug 1990 to 7 Mar 1991	45	24	21
Air Operations Iraq	16 Jul 1991 to 30 Apr 2003	5	0	5
Cambodia (UNAMIC/UNTAC)	1 Oct 1991 to 30 Sep 1993	1	0	1
Balkans <sup>4,5</sup>	1 Jul 1992 to present	72	13	59
Sierra Leone (OSM)	5 May 2000 to 31 Jul 2002	5	1	4
Afghanistan <sup>4</sup> (OSM)	11 Sep 2001 to present	453	404	49
Iraq	20 Jan 2003 to 22 May 2011	178	135	43
Libya	19 Mar 2011 to 31 Oct 2011	1	0	1

**Source: Defence Statistics (Health)**

1. Includes: Korea Medal 2 July 1950 - 27 July 1953 and Korea medal (UN) 27 June 1950 – 27 July 1954.
2. As at 31 December 2013.
3. Amended from previous releases of information in UK Defence Statistics, Parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests due to Defence Statistics (Health) validation exercise on all Northern Ireland deaths.
4. As at 31 October 2014. As part of an ongoing commitment to report deaths for all medium scale Operations and Operations of interest, deaths as a result of operations in Afghanistan are published monthly at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/op-herrick-casualty-and-fatality-tables-index>
5. Includes: the Former Yugoslavia (NATO FRY) 1 July 1992-31 December 2002; Sarajevo Airlift (UN) 3 July 1992 – 12 January 1996; Georgia (UNOMIG) 23 August 1993 to present; Kosovo (NATO) 13 October 1998 – 31 December 2002; Kosovo (UNMIK) 10 June 1999 to present; Macedonia (NATO) 1 June 2001 – 31 December 2002 and Balkans (NATO) 1 January 2003 to present. To identify which deaths occurred on specific Operations relating to activities in the Balkans, individual Service records would need to be examined, as such MOD presents the information under the overarching category 'Balkans'.
6. A battle casualty who is killed outright or dies of wounds received in action.
7. Deaths due to: accidents, natural causes, assaults, coroner confirmed suicide or open verdicts and cause not known.

36. **Table 1** shows, the largest number of deaths among UK Armed Forces personnel in one medal earning Operation was the loss of 1,443 lives in Malaya between 16 June 1948 and 31 July 1960.
37. The second largest number of deaths occurred as a result of Operations in Northern Ireland where 1,441 UK Armed Forces Personnel died between 14 August 1969 and 31 July 2007.
38. The third largest number of deaths as a result of a medal earning Operation was the United Nations led campaign in Korea between 27 June 1950 and 27 July 1954.
39. NATO and United Nations led Operations in Cyprus and the Balkans are ongoing, with the loss of three and 72 UK Armed Forces personnel to date respectively.
40. At 31 October 2014, 453 UK Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of Operations in Afghanistan.
41. Operations in Afghanistan, the Balkans and Cyprus are ongoing and therefore the number of deaths presented in **Table 1** is correct as at 31 October 2014. This report will be updated six weeks after the end of each Operation. In the meantime, as part of Defence Statistics ongoing commitment to report casualties from all medium scale Operations and Operations which are of political and media interest, deaths as a result of Operations in Afghanistan are published each month on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
42. **Figure 1** presents the number of UK Armed Forces deaths by geographical location.
43. **Table 2** and **Figure 2** presents the number of UK Armed Forces deaths by year and medal earning operation.
44. The highest number of deaths to occur in a single year was in 1951, when 829 personnel lost their lives in Operations in Malaya, Korea and the Canal Zone.
45. **Table 2** shows that since 1945, 1968 is the only year where no UK Armed Forces personnel have lost their lives as a result of a medal earning Operation.
46. To provide context to the information presented in **Tables 1-2 and Figures 1-2**, in the past 25 years (between 1989 and 2013), 22% of all UK Armed Forces in-Service deaths have occurred whilst on Operations (1,062 out of 4,745 deaths). The highest number of deaths in a single year within this latest 25-year period was in 2010, where 55% (103 out of 187 deaths) were the result of Operations in Afghanistan. The lowest number of operational deaths during this period was in 1996 when 7% of all in-service deaths were the result of Operations (12 out of 165 deaths). The 'Deaths in the UK regular Armed Forces' National Statistic published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) provides further details on all causes of death among UK military personnel.

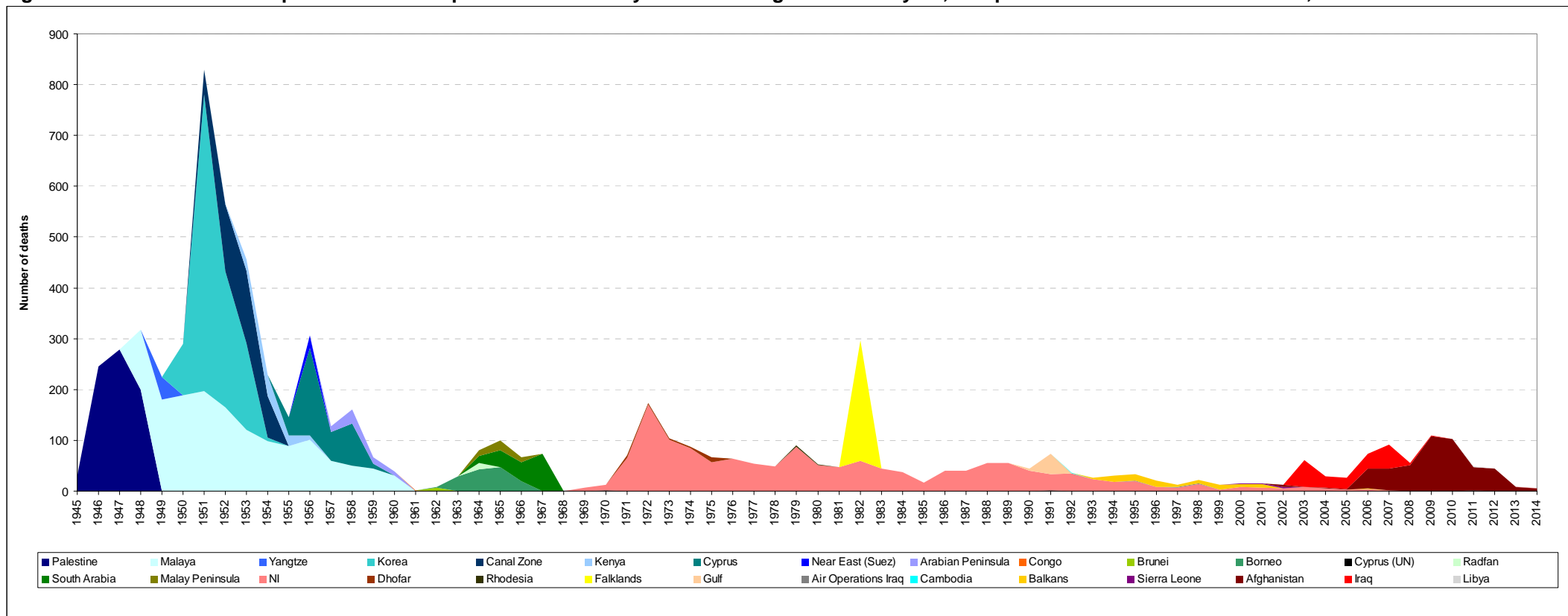
Figure 1: UK Armed Forces Operational deaths post World War II by medal earning theatre and location, 3 September 1945 to 31 October 2014, numbers



Source: Defence Statistics (Health)

See Table 1 footnotes

**Figure 2: UK Armed Forces Operational deaths post World War II by medal earning theatre and year, 3 September 1945 to 31 October 2014, numbers**



**Source: Defence Statistics (Health)**

**Notes:**

1. Includes: Korea Medal 2 July 1950 - 27 July 1953 and Korea medal (UN) 27 June 1950 – 27 July 1954.
2. As at 31 December 2013.
3. Amended from previous releases of information in UK Defence Statistics, Parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests due to Defence Statistics (Health) validation exercise on all Northern Ireland deaths.
4. As at 31 October 2014.
5. Includes: the Former Yugoslavia (NATO FRY) 1 July 1992-31 December 2002; Sarajevo Airlift (UN) 3 July 1992 – 12 January 1996; Georgia (UNOMIG) 23 August 1993 to present; Kosovo (NATO) 13 October 1998 – 31 December 2002; Kosovo (UNMIK) 10 June 1999 to present; Macedonia (NATO) 1 June 2001 – 31 December 2002 and Balkans (NATO) 1 January 2003 to present. To identify which deaths occurred on specific Operations relating to activities in the Balkans, individual Service records would need to be examined, as such MOD presents the information under the overarching category 'Balkans'.
6. A battle casualty who is killed outright or dies of wounds received in action.
7. Deaths due to: accidents, natural causes, assaults, coroner confirmed suicide or open verdicts and cause not known.





## ANNEX A – LIST OF QUALIFYING MEDAL EARNING THEATRES FOR THE ELIZABETH CROSS

Theatre	Dates
UK & Pacific (Minesweeping 45/51) (Navy)	09-May-45 to 30-Sep-51
UK (Bomb & Mine Clearance GSM)	09-May-45 to 30-Sep-53
Palestine (GSM)	03-Sep-45 to 30-Jun-48
Malaya (GSM) (Singapore)	16-Jun-48 to 31-Jan-59
Malaya (GSM) (Malaya)	16-Jun-48 to 31-Jul-60
Yangtze (NGSM)	20-Apr-49 to 31-Jul-49
Korea Medal	02-Jul-50 to 27-Jul-53
Korea Medal (UN)	27-Jun-50 to 27-Jul-54
Canal Zone (GSM)	16-Oct-51 to 19-Oct-54
Kenya (AGSM)	21-Oct-52 to 17-Nov-56
Bomb & Mine Clearance (Med) (GSM)	01-Jan-55 to 31-Dec-60
Cyprus (GSM)	01-Apr-55 to 18-Apr-59
Near East (Suez) (GSM)	31-Oct-56 to 22-Dec-56
Arabian Peninsula (GSM)	01-Jan-57 to 30-Jun-60
Congo (ONUC)	10-Jul-60 to 30-Jun-64
Brunei (GSM)	08-Dec-62 to 23-Dec-62
Brunei (GSM) (Navy)	08-Dec-62 to 20-Dec-62
Borneo (GSM)	24-Dec-62 to 11-Aug-66
Cyprus (UNFICYP)	27-Mar-64 to present
Radfan (GSM)	25-Apr-64 to 31-Jul-64
South Arabia (GSM)	01-Aug-64 to 30-Nov-67
Malay Peninsula (GSM) (All services)	17-Aug-64 to 12-Jun-65
Malay Peninsula (GSM) (Navy)	17-Aug-64 to 11-Aug-66
Malay Peninsula (GSM) (RAF)	13-Jun-65 to 11-Aug-66
Northern Ireland (GSM)	14-Aug-69 to 31-Jul-07
Dhofar (GSM)	01-Oct-69 to 03-Sep-76
Rhodesia Medal	01-Dec-79 to 20-Mar-80
South Atlantic Medal (Falklands)	02-Apr-82 to 14-Jun-82
South Atlantic Medal (Falklands) (Ascension Island)	02-Apr-82 to 12-Jul-82
Lebanon (GSM)	07-Feb-83 to 09-Mar-84
Gulf of Suez (GSM Mine Clearance)	15-Aug-84 to 15-Oct-84
Gulf (GSM)	17-Nov-86 to 28-Feb-89
Peshawar (UNOCHA)	1989 to 1990
Namibia (UNTAG)	01-Apr-89 to 31-Mar-90
The Gulf Medal	02-Aug-90 to 07-Mar-91
Kuwait (GSM)	08-Mar-91 to 30-Sep-91
Iraq/Kuwait (UNIKOM)	01-Apr-91 to 06-Oct-03
Western Sahara (MINURSO)	10-Apr-91 to present
Northern Iraq & South Turkey	06-Apr-91 to 17-Jul-91
Air Operations Iraq (RESINATE SOUTH)	16-Jul-91 to 18-Mar-03
Air Operations Iraq (RESINATE NORTH)	16-Jul-91 to 30-Apr-03
Cambodia (UNAMIC/UNTAC)	01-Oct-91 to 30-Sep-93
Former Yugoslavia (NATO FRY)	01-Jul-92 to 31-Dec-02
Sarajevo Airlift (UN Special Service)	03-Jul-92 to 12-Jan-96
Georgia (UNOMIG)	23-Aug-93 to present
Rwanda (UNAMIR)	01-Oct-93 to 31-Mar-96
Angola (UNAVEM 3)	01-Feb-95 to 01-Jun-97
Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL)	01-Jun-98 to 31-Dec-02
Kosovo (NATO)	13-Oct-98 to 31-Dec-02
East Timor (UNAMET/UNTAET)	07-Jun-99 to present
Kosovo (UNMIK)	10-Jun-99 to present
Congo (MONUC)	30-Nov-99 to present
Sierra Leone (OSM)	05-May-00 to 31-Jul-02
Ethiopia/Eritrea (UNMEE)	15-Sep-00 to present
Macedonia (NATO)	01-Jun-01 to 31-Dec-02
Afghanistan (OSM)	11-Sep-01 to present
Balkans (NATO)	01-Jan-03 to present
Iraq Medal	20-Jan-03 to 22-May-11
Democratic Republic of Congo (OSM)	14-Jun-03 to 10-Sep-03

## ANNEX B – QUALIFYING MEDAL ABBREVIATIONS

AGSM	– Africa General Service Medal
GSM	– General Service Medal
MINURSO	– Mission des nations unies pour le referendum dans le Sahara Occidental
MONUC	– Mission des Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo
NATO	– North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NATO FRY	– North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Former Republic of Yugoslavia
NGSM	– Naval General Service Medal
ONUC	– Operation des Nations Unies au Congo
OSM	– Operational Service Medal
UN	– United Nations
UNAMET	– United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor
UNAMIC	– United Nations Advanced Mission in Cambodia
UNAMIR	– United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAVEM	– United Nations Angola Verification Mission
UNFICYP	– United Nations Force in Cyprus
UNIKOM	– United Nations Iraq/Kuwait Observer Mission
UNOCHA	– United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNMEE	– United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIK	– United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNOMIG	– United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNOMSIL	– United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNTAC	– United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAET	– United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNTAG	– United Nations Transition Assistance Group